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ABSTRACT

There are cognitive, social, personal, and practical reasons for studying a second language, and the syllabus is shaped by these and the identity of the learners, general and specific course objectives, educational principles, course components, learner input, and student evaluation procedures. A dynamic syllabus addresses four language competence types: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic. These competencies, and the language skills that play a role in each, constitute an individual's language proficiency, and provide the framework for a syllabus and sub-syllabi with variations in emphasis. Construction of the sub-syllabi follows a non-culture-specific procedure of syllabus preparation, testing, and revision with components including teacher/learner input, individual/group output, speech acts/functions, general notions and relations, discourse features, grammatical exponents, skills, topics and sub-topics, themes, activities, testing, negotiation, evaluation and reflection, and reintroduction. The components can take a variety of forms, and any can serve as an organizing principle for the overall syllabus. Beyond this point, the syllabus becomes culture-specific and it is the teacher's responsibility to provide culture-specific information continually. Students can take some responsibility for their own learning. There does exist a need for test item banks and formats valid across languages. (MSE)

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* LOTE PEDAGOGY AND COURSE DESIGN

Marta Rado

(Paper presented at the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education Languages other than English Policy and Action Conference, Melbourne 12/13 April, 1985.)

INTRODUCTION

In a discussion on course design it might be useful to begin by making a distinction between 'curriculum' and 'syllabus'. For this purpose I have adopted the definition given by Allen et al. (1984:84) namely that 'curriculum' is "a general term for the entire organized teaching plan of a subject, while 'syllabus' refers to a sub-area or smaller division of the curriculum." The implications of this definition are that we should keep in mind, when discussing the HSC LOTE syllabus, the larger context in which it is placed. In other words, we should consider the entire LOTE curriculum and also the total school curriculum from P to 12.

Perhaps the first question to ask is whether it is legitimate to talk about a LOTE curriculum generally in view of the impressive number of languages involved (31). The answer is in the affirmative because despite the obvious differences there is sufficient commonality across languages.

All languages share the same rationale for introducing a language in the curriculum because the reasons are independent of a particular language.

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* LOTE - Language Other Than English

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Table 1: LOTE TEACHING RATIONALE

INTELLECTUAL ADVANTAGES

- Intrinsic Value
- Good Education
- Discipline of the Mind
- Unique Experience

LINGUISTIC AWARENESS

- Reflecting on Language
- Language Analysis
- Language Correction
- Comparing Language Forms

INTEREST IN LOTE

- Language Maintenance
- Professional/Occupational Advantages
- Social Relations
- Personal Satisfaction

INSTRUMENTAL

- Obtaining a High Score

1, The raising of linguistic awareness manifests itself in a number of ways. Among these are the ability to look at language as an object, to reflect upon it, to analyse it, to comment on it, to correct one's own speech and that of others, to make interlingual comparisons, to ask for cross-linguistic information and many others. Although language competence is based on non-conscious processes, this does not preclude the overt, conscious control of language. Although linguistic awareness is not strictly necessary to language acquisition, nevertheless analytic and judgemental functions do have practical significance. In Read's words:

> The performance of adapting, manipulating, segmenting, correcting and judging language seem to play an important role in at least three processes: learning to read and write, learning a non-native language, and responding to social expectations.
>
> ... (it) is a crucial part of that self-awareness and capacity for self-criticism which may underlie our sense of our own history and our thinking ... (and so) forms part of the basis of our humanity and our worth.
>
> (1978: 80)

There is now a growing body of research evidence documenting heightened linguistic awareness in bilinguals and second language learners. (e.g. Ben-Zeev, 1977; Slobin, 1978 and Tunmer and Myhill, 1984).

2. Interest in a particular language which can have a variety of sources sometimes operating in combination. Learners might be prompted by the wish to maintain the family language for practical communication and/or sentimental reasons; they may be motivated by professional interests or job prospects (e.g. sociologists may wish to learn French, diplomats the language of their impending

posting, technicians the language of the underdeveloped country where they will train future users of technical equipment; medical and social workers the language of linguistic minorities). Interest may also be socially based. For example, some people may wish to mix more easily with the family or friends of partners. Others may be prompted by purely personal interest, such as finding language learning enjoyable, a leisure activity that will add to the pleasure of viewing films, travelling and so forth.

3. The long-respected intellectual advantages attributed to learning a second/foreign language expressed in terms of intrinsic value, 'good' education, discipline of the mind, are another set of reasons to be taken into consideration. To these one could add the unique cognitive and social experiences language learning offers.

4. There is also the instrumental reason of the likelihood of obtaining a high score. In a competitive examination system, this is a powerful factor in subject choice.

In sum, there are cognitive, social, personal and instrumental reasons for studying a LOTE. (For further details See Rado, 1984.)

Although the rationale exerts a powerful influence on syllabus design it is not the only significant factor. The syllabus is also shaped by the identity of the learners, the overall aims, the specific objectives, the guiding principles, the components, the teaching methodology, the assumed learning processes, learner input and the testing and examining procedures. Added to this is the assumption that there is an ideal syllabus one should try to approximate. The concept of an ideal syllabus, which has always preoccupied language teachers, is a useful one because it draws attention to continuity in teaching. It

highlights the fact that changes might not be as radical as they appear because they effect shifts in focus but do not entirely change previous components and methods. If this is the case teachers, albeit with some help, should be able to cope with current trends towards adopting communicative/interactive syllabuses.

The task to be undertaken for the construction of such a syllabus include the following.

Table 2: TASK OF IDENTIFICATION

Learners
Rationale
Aims
Specific Objectives
Organising Principles
Integration with other Subjects
Content Components
Teaching Methodology
Learning Processes
Learner Input
Testing/Examining Procedures
Evaluation
Recycling

Undoubtedly the shift in emphasis is triggered by linguistic considerations, but also by views on learner involvement and the expanded age range of learners. We owe much to the re-thinking associated with the need to teach adults. It is because of the pressure to satisfy adult learners that much that has been implicit in language teaching has now been made explicit and prominent.

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One shift is focus in the recognition of learners as shapers of the syllabus. We now have a number of model instruments designed to ascertain where the learner stands not only in linguistic terms but also in affect, expectations and commitment. Of course, we have always taken cognizance of our learners by using our knowledge of the school population and making inferences on the basis of classroom observations, but we have rarely consulted students directly. Often by the time we met our students face-to-face the syllabus was already drawn up and considered mandatory. If it was not covered by the end of the year, we felt guilty. Today the opposite is true if we adopt the concept of a process and student-centred syllabus. In such an approach the syllabus is subject to constant negotiation with students whose input gives it direction. A process syllabus is drawn up on the basis of information gathered from students. It is a proposal subject to constant consultation and revision. Consequently it is a dynamic syllabus, flexible with respect to emphasis and content but with the firm ultimate aim of knowing a language. This knowledge is not expressed in terms of the four skills, but rather in terms of four competencies (Higgs, 1984: 45).

Table 3: TYPES OF LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

Grammatical

Sociolinguistic (handling speech acts and style)

Discourse (building texts)

Strategic (solving communication difficulties)

The skills play a role in each of the competencies. It is important to note that skills today are specified in much greater detail than has been the case previously (see Munby, 1978). Further discourse and strategic competence have only recently been made explicit. The sum total of these competencies constitute and individual's language proficiency.

This is one objective of language teaching. Other objectives include conceptual development in the cultural or in other domains, such as the disciplines or a practical subject; a positive attitude towards the second language and the learning of a second language; the ability to transfer, namely to apply second language learning strategies to new settings, to apply knowledge, attitudes and skills gained to other subject areas. Proficiency, knowledge and objectives apply to the specific target language setting. Transfer has a high degree of generalisability to other language learning situations and settings outside the domain of language.

If one associates each of these competencies with a particular syllabus and its objectives, one can construct a curriculum framework consisting of a set of sub-syllabuses characterised by variation in emphasis. What this approach suggests is that the HSC syllabus should consist of a set of sub-syllabuses with different aims which togetner would lead to global proficiency.

Table 4: SET OF SUB-SYLLABUSES

CONTENT OF SYLLABUS	OBJECTIVE				SALIENT TEACHING STRATEGIES
	Proficiency	Knowledge	Affect	Transfer	
Form of language					Formal study
Notions/ functions					Functional activities
Culture					Formal/study experiences
Language awareness					Discussion
Special purposes					Small Group/self access study

(Based on Allen et al. 1984: 85)

At HSC level, syllabus sets have great advantage as they can cater for the requirements of both the core and the options. At present the former is minimally negotiable. However, it is possible to vary the latter. The former adopts a global approach with respect to form and communicative function, the latter allow for fairly narrow specialisation. The former could set a ceiling attainable by students not in daily contact with the language in everyday life. If the ceiling is exceeded no extra credit would be given so that native speakers would not be advantaged. The options on the other hand, could give credit for excellence achieved in particular areas. Such a procedure recognises specialist language skills, yet would not unfairly disadvantage candidates as some skills would only be of interest in particular circumstances. One could assume that superior verbal fluency would be valued more highly by employers of tourist guides than the ability to interpret literary texts. The converse might be true of university language departments.

Whatever sub-syllabuses we intend to develop the steps to be taken in their preparation are the same.

Table 5: LANGUAGE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Needs survey

Description of Purpose

|--> Selection of syllabus type

|--> Production of a proto-syllabus

|--> Production of a pedagogical syllabus

|--> Development of classroom procedures/testing

|--> Implementation

|--> Learner input

|--> Evaluation

|--> Recycling

(Based on Yalden, 1983: 88)

The steps do not represent a purely linear progression. Particularly the last three are also re-curring and retrospective. Some of the elements are self-evident, others deserve comment. The Needs Survey should include information on students' language proficiency to serve as a starting point. The proto-syllabus is a description of the language and language use to be covered. In other words, it is an inventory of situations, events, functions, their exponents, aspects of discourse and so forth. A pedagogical syllabus translates these into teaching materials and testing instruments/procedures. Development of classroom procedures organises these into teaching units or lesson plans including activities/exercises. Recycling/negotiating/reflecting serve the purpose of maintaining the fit between what students have contracted and want to learn and what is actually being learnt.

This brings us to the actual construction of a sub-syllabus tailored to learners' needs. Because of the heterogeneous nature of the student population different materials and activities may be needed for different students in order to achieve the same outcomes. Different needs can be satisfied in the same classroom by means of sub-grouping and provision for self-access learning. However, this should not be done to the total exclusion of whole group work as language use is strongly socially oriented.

Before syllabus construction can begin the components have to be specified. At this level of generality, they are part of every language syllabus irrespective of language and level of targeted proficiency.

Table 6: LOTE SYLLABUS COMPONENTS

A Input - teacher/learner

B Output - individual/group

C Speech acts/functions

D General notions and relations

E Discourse features

F Grammatical exponents

G Skills

H Topic and sub-topics

I Theme

J Activities

K Testing

L Negotiation

M Evaluation/reflection

N Recycling

Examples of the components are:

A. Written text, speech, visual, nil

B. Written text, speech, visual, non-verbal action

C. Reporting, judging, socialising

D. Entities, properties and qualities, spatial and temporal notions

E. Cohesion

F. Present tense, plural of nouns, possessive adjective

G. Scanning a text, note taking

H. Personal identification, relations with others

I. Self-portrait

J. Role playing

K. Responding to an oral/written invitation in an appropriate way

L. Agreeing with students on procedures to be adopted

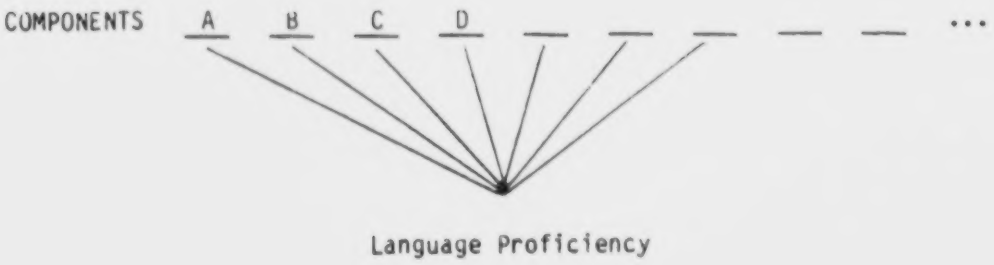
M. Keeping notes consistently on each lesson given

N. Re-introducing familiar material in a different context

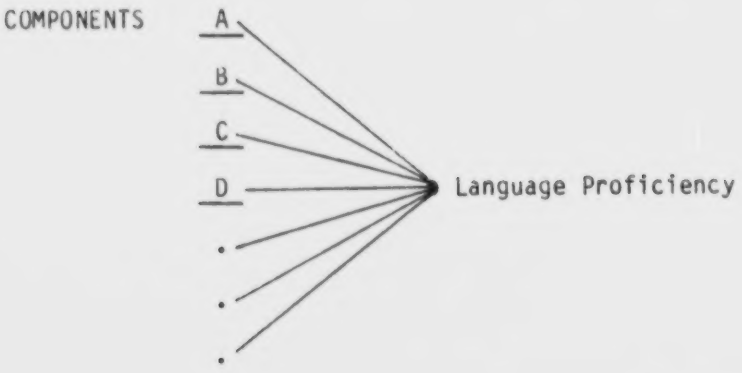
Note that some syllabus designers omit the grammatical components because they say they arise naturally from the functions and notions and so don't have to be specified separately.

Figure 1: ALTERNATIVES IN DISPLAYING COMPONENTS OF A SYLLABUS

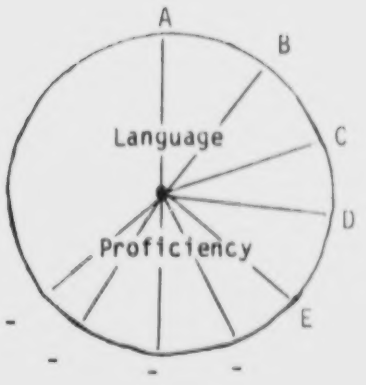
1. HORIZONTAL:



2. VERTICAL:



3. CIRCULAR:



There is a fair consensus on the listing of syllabus components. What is arguable is where to start. In other words, there is no agreement on which component should serve as the organising principle. Should we start as before by selecting the grammatical forms or the theme or do we begin with choosing the functions? Will the starting point determine the emphasis? If we conceptualise the components as forming a closed circle, this may help us to understand that here we have a merry-go-round where it may not matter where we get on. Wherever we begin our ride, we shall complete the same circle, pass the same signposts. What matters is to appreciate that all components relate to the central concept of language proficiency. They interact with each other and shape each other, hence the complexity of language and language learning.

LANGUAGE SPECIFIC LOTE SYLLABUSES

At this point LOTE syllabuses diversify and become culture specific. When dealing with a particular language the highlighting of the cultural context of language use should be a major concern. The teacher must pay constant attention to supplying students with the necessary culture specific information for the understanding of a text. The contextualisation of written discourse is particularly important because this mode is context reduced in that the reader must rely entirely on the text whereas everyday conversations are usually supported by extralinguistic clues supplied, for example, by the visual environment. Clearly, teaching skills should include contextualisation techniques. One example of such a technique is the culture capsule which focuses on communication breakdowns due to culture based misunderstandings (see Claydon, Knight and Rado, 1977: 155). Students could also share the customs and beliefs of their families as examples for or in contrast to the contextualisation in hand. If these are also written down, they can be edited and then published in the school magazine and used with other groups in the

future.

For example, what do I mean when I say : The sun is shining today? With this statement I could convey a variety of messages depending on my intention and the circumstances. These meanings could include:

It is warm, you don't need a coat.

It is not going to rain, you don't need an umbrella.

We can go for a walk.

It is a happy day.

At last our troubles are over.

The list could be considerably extended.

The Year 12 Syllabus.

At present in Victoria, the year 12 or HSC syllabus consists of a core and a choice of options. This has the advantage of making different modes of examining possible. It also adds to the flexibility in syllabus design. The core offers the opportunity of developing global language proficiency. This is the common element across the HSC LOTE syllabuses. In contrast, the options offer an indefinite variety. Therein lie their attraction as they can be made more language and learner specific.

When selecting the themes, topics ans sub-topics for either the core or the options, one should keep in mind the nature of the materials. Are they discipline based and so worthy of enriching students' semantic memory? Or is their content destined for temporary retention in episodic memory only, in other

words inconsequential? Perhaps in teaching and practising everyday conversations triviality is unavoidable, but otherwise a conceptually richer input is highly desirable. It must be remembered that language is more a vehicle than an object of thought.

Core studies could include the well established literary studies, but also sociocultural themes, such as the role of sport in society. It is desirable that the course introduce students to a variety of spoken and written genres. A realistic amount of independent listening and reading should be an integral part of the program.

The core is compulsory, but there can be variety within it. In contrast there is a choice of options but their focus is potentially narrower and so they offer the opportunity of in-depth study. Moreover the options can cater for individual skills and interests and can give credit for excellence.

Table 7: OPTION TOPICS

LITERATURE (Literary Criticism)
HISTORY (Studying Documents)
FOLK ART (Visual, Dance, Music In Social Context)
HOME ECONOMICS (Socio-cultural, Scientific)
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES/ECOLOGY: Mining, Animal Protection (Science, Engineering, Politics)
FILM (Socio-cultural, Aesthetic)
FOLK TALES (Socio-cultural)
THE STATUS OF WOMEN (Contemporary Issues)
ADOLESCENTS (Socio-cultural)
TYPES OF INDUSTRY (Economics, Commerce)

Options offer the opportunity of satisfying a wider variety of student interests from the literary scientific, to the aesthetic and practical. For example, a possible option topic is folk art. Through the study of materials, designs, the method of production and the use of such artifacts, students would gain an insight into the life of the people and, at the same time learn a great deal of language. Another option could be concerned with food. The preparation of food, the manner of hospitality, the food associated with important occasions, the beliefs about food, offer valuable insights into social conditions. Films are another rich source of language study. Similarly to literature, they should be studied from the point of view of their aesthetic value, the manner of production and the language content. Other options that come to mind are the role of women in the family and society, the various popular movements such as 'the greenies', animal protection. In short, issues taken up by speakers of the language can be considered. The options also offer the opportunity to develop specialist skills, such as translation. Here attention should be paid to stylistically appropriate translation and the use of a dictionary allowed because of the unpredictability of vocabulary items that might be needed.

These comments and the short list above can serve as an introduction. In fact topics are inexhaustible and if culturally contextualised will deepen the insights of all learners irrespective of language proficiency. Options lend themselves admirably to learner input and the fostering of student responsibility.

Student responsibilities include

- negotiating objectives
- indicating types of preferred learning experience
- perseverance with self-access study
- recording for self
- self-evaluation and participation in scoring
- decision as to how much effort should be expanded

Record keeping could take various formats. The following is one example.

Table 8: RECORD KEPT BY STUDENT

	LESSONS					
LEARNING/MATERIALS/TASKS	1	2	3	4	5	....
easy						
not easy/not difficult						
difficult						
successful						
fairly successful						
not successful						
interesting						
fairly interesting						
not interesting						
enjoyable						
fairly enjoyable						
not enjoyable						
TYPE OF FURTHER LEARNING NEEDED						
e.g. nil						
self-access						
role-play						
ELEMENTS THAT NEED FURTHER PRACTICE						
e.g. grammatical form						
conesive device						
speech act						
LEVEL ACHIEVED						
TIME/EFFORT EXPANDED						

For participation in scoring, the following procedure could be adopted. Students work is marked but not corrected. Two points are taken off for each error. If students can correct and explain their error they are debited with one point only. In other words, they lose one mark instead of two.

Generally students can be encouraged to check their written work carefully. This type of self-monitoring takes place after the writing has been completed and is therefore feasible. Conscious attention to language is less fruitful during the process of writing and undoubtedly inhibits speech because of the speed with which we speak and understand what we hear.

Maximising student participation is in part advocated on the grounds that it helps students to learn how to learn.

There are a number of assumptions current about the nature of language and language learning today. Some of these have clear practical implications for classroom activities. Those presented here can serve as reminders.

- Formal learning includes: repeated reading, listening, viewing, memorising, analysing, practising, exploiting bits of language.
- Language is internalised by learning chunks and reworking elements within chunks.
- In both first and second language acquisition the learner generally moves from the whole to the parts.
- Covert language use (conversation/correspondence) and covert or sub-vocal internal use (viewing, listening, reading) enables students to shift formally learnt chuncks/systems to internalised systems.

Testing/Examining.

An important principle underlying testing/examining is that such procedures should offer a worth while learning experience. Further it has to be understood that the global and communicative competence aims are not mutually exclusive. To equate the ability of merely making oneself understood orally, with communicative competence is based on a misunderstanding. Communicative competence refers to the ability of verbal interaction by means of all available channels in a stylistically appropriate way. It makes greater demands on the speaker than expectations of grammatical correctnes. In sum, a language examination today should test all competencies, skills and channels in a way that is genuine communication. (A broad interpretation of communication is tne closing of information gap.) Such a purpose can be served naturally by non-trivial discipline based materials. Such materials present students with genuine new information the discussion of which leads to authentic communication. Where authentic communication cannot be created, role playing and other simulation exercises have proved useful.

What we urgently need is a test item bank. Test formats would be valid across LOTES. The content and points to be tested would vary with the language. Tests could be grouped according to what aspect of language they test best. Many would fit into more than one category. Items should be contextualised. Consequently they should be part of a connected text and not presented as isolated items or in isolated sentences. In fact one should consider the usefulness of adopting a central theme for testing during a lesson or in a formal examination paper. In contrast to a central theme, a variety of stimulus materials could be used with respect to channel, e.g. visual, printed and a variety of genres, e.g. narrative and expository prose, dialogue.

The selection of tests presented here is intended to serve as an appetiser.

Table 9: SELECTION OF TESTS

A ORAL

Matching speech acts with situations

Performing speech acts on the basis of

(a) verbal context

(b) visual context

Solving a problem

Overhearing

Selective listening

Making decisions

Gisting

B READING

Following written instructions

Inserting missing information in a text

Comparing content, problems, solutions across texts and formulating judgments

C WRITING

Short message

Completing forms

Taking notes

Responding to an invitation

Mail booking, ordering

Asking a favour

Summarising survey results

A few comments on the handling of tests/exercises might be illuminating.

- Overhearing : You hear a conversation between shop assistant and customer who wants to exchange a purchase. Who won the argument? How do you know?
- Selective listening : You hear airport announcements about delays in departures. Your destination is X. How long is your delay?
- Making decisions : You are in a department store and hear a warning announcement about closing time. Will you delay the shop assistant or forego the purchase? Why?
- Gisting : You hear a report of a hijacking. Relate the main events to a friend who did not hear the news broadcast but has a relative on board.
- Speech act of making excuses : How do you excuse yourself if you are late to school/did not do your homework/have to leave in the middle of a party?
- Speech act of giving directives : Give the student a set of maps to choose from without showing it to you. You have a blank map in front of you with only the streets marked, but no buildings. Ask the student to give you instructions how to get from point A to point B as marked on his or her map.
- Sequencing in texts : Give a passage with some sentences deleted. It could be a censored letter or document containing classified information. Supply a set of sentences and ask students to insert these in the appropriate places.
- Reading comprehension : Give three passages dealing with the same problem but with different solutions or the same solution but arrived at four different reasons or a description of the same event by different participants/bystanders. Ask students to choose and justify the best solution, reason, description or suggest alternatives.
- Following written instructions : On the basis of written instructions get students to assemble a toy, draw a picture, select the right message.
- Communicating in writing : Write a note to your friend saying that you will call again in half an hour. / Complete a car registration form. / Take notes in a meeting. / Respond to an invitation. / Make a mail booking. / Ask for

the extension of an assignment. / Summarise the results of a survey.

The Future

The foregoing points to future language teaching scenarios based on the principles of relevance, usefulness and comprehensibility.

To meet the requirements detailed in this paper, language committees need to develop guidelines and stimulate the production of suitable teaching modules and tests. Teachers and students should be given the opportunity and necessary support for contributing to the development of materials. The final year should be planned on the basis of sub-syllabuses drawing on a variety of materials and sources both commercial and custom made by volunteers who should be given some time allowance. Language committees should set up mechanisms for sharing materials and information. Education Department and Catholic Education language consultants could play an important role here.

For isolated students or students who form too small a group to warrant daily lessons with a teacher, or students out of step with the rest of the group in that they are too advanced or at lower level or proficiency, could participate in distance education. Suitable equipment for distance education is now being developed by the South Australian Education Department's Education Technology Centre with the assistance of Werner Electronics. Such equipment could be used for inter-school cooperation where teachers could sub-group students and combine sub-groups across schools for certain lessons. This type of sharing would broaden both the students and teachers experience and make good use of specialist expertise.

Our increasing linguistic insights and recent technological development should enable us language teachers to offer a clearly enriching and attractive learning experience to students in Australia.

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